



90-DAY PLAN ON HOMELESSNESS IN HAWAI‘I

May 17, 2011

In 1797, Kamehameha I issued the Law of the Splintered Paddle (*Ke Kānāwai Māmalahoe*), which is a unique and living symbol of the State's concern for its most vulnerable citizens. This law was adopted in the Hawai‘i State Constitution and is an important foundation upon which housing, healthcare, and the judicial systems serve Hawai‘i residents.

Governor Neil Abercrombie has made the elimination of homelessness one of the top priorities of his administration, describing it as a “moral imperative.” He appointed the first ever Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, embracing the vision that through statewide, unified and coordinated actions by government, non-profits and the private sector, every woman, child and man will have dignified housing. A New Day in the drive to eliminate homelessness is characterized by a strategic approach, structural change, unprecedented collaboration and civic involvement.

According to 2007 data, Hawai‘i has twice as many people who are homeless per 100,000 people as the national average. Data from 2010 indicate that almost one third of the sheltered homeless are children; more than ten percent are veterans; and over 60 percent have lived in Hawai‘i for more than ten years. Almost half of the families who are homeless include someone who is employed, and almost 30 percent are Hawaiian or part Hawaiian.

Just as there is no single profile for someone who is homeless, there are no simple solutions to ending homelessness.

At the national level, the first ever comprehensive plan to end homelessness was released in 2010, “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.” Locally, many government agencies, non-profits, and the private sector have been working diligently and successfully to assist those who are homeless.

This 90-Day Plan is intended as an initial and immediate action approach to end homelessness. It is designed to provide visible, measurable and significant relief that will benefit persons who are chronically homeless and our larger community. Broader issues, such as affordable housing strategies and workforce development program expansion, will be addressed in the comprehensive longer-term statewide homelessness plan that will follow this 90-Day Plan.

This 90-Day Plan does not rely on any additional local government funds. It will, however, seek the financial support and commitment of the private sector in matching government funds already budgeted to address homelessness. It is only by working together more effectively that we can make significant strides toward restoring dignity to all people, including our neighbors who are homeless.

Office of the Governor
THE HONORABLE NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor, State of Hawai‘i

VISION

Everyone deserves a dignified place to call home.

GOALS

- Set a path for greater coordinated action to ending homelessness.
- Demonstrate collective resolve in addressing homelessness in Hawai'i.
- Provide immediate and measurable relief to the visible chronically homeless who are most in need.
- Ensure that public areas are available to all members of the community.

THEMES

A. REACH OUT AND ASSIST THE MOST VULNERABLE¹ PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Objective 1: Identify and assess people who are chronically homeless for immediate services in Waikiki and the urban core of Honolulu.

Actions:

- Complete a voluntary registry of persons who are homeless in Waikiki and the urban core of Honolulu to identify needs and those requiring assistance and intervention.
- Rapidly house with services the most vulnerable.
- Offer a package of services to include psychiatric outreach services.

Objective 2: Support the chronically homeless and chronically mentally ill who are gravely disabled² to receive needed mental health treatment.

Actions:

- Research and implement appropriate options consistent with statutes and regulations.
- Begin the dialogue with the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), insurance carriers, and other community groups in developing mental health service options for the future.

Objective 3: Identify available substance abuse treatment services and gaps in services in order to maximize access for the chronically homeless in need.

Actions:

- Review and inventory services and beds for substance abuse treatment in various geographic regions, including capacity and availability.
- Identify and expand resources for medically supervised drug treatment as potential increased funding is identified.

B. INCREASE ACCESS TO PUBLIC AREAS FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Objective 4: Identify and provide outreach as early as possible where persons who are homeless are established or increasing in number.

Actions:

- Develop Homeless Assistance Teams (HAT), made up of outreach professionals and trained volunteers, to reach out to those in need with appropriate services.
- Assign HATs to areas where persons who are homeless are gathering as early as possible to provide outreach services.
- Coordinate government, shelter and outreach services to increase opportunities for persons in need to receive services.

¹ The "vulnerability index" is one of the key instruments used to determine vulnerability. For more information on the vulnerability index see http://www.commonground.org/?page_id=789.

² "Gravely disabled" is defined as "a condition in which a person, as a result of a mental disorder, (1) is unable to provide for that individual's basic personal needs for food, clothing, or shelter; (2) is unable to make or communicate rational or responsible decisions concerning the individual's personal welfare; and (3) lacks the capacity to understand that this is so." (Hawai'i Revised Statutes §334-1)

Objective 5: Coordinate community efforts to maintain clean public areas.

Actions:

- Coordinate government and volunteer groups in maintaining clean public areas for community use and enjoyment.
- Explore joint partnerships with government, local businesses, faith-based communities, and community centers in identifying possible ways to make restrooms and potable water more available to the public.

Objective 6: Ensure that existing shelters are maximized for capacity and service.

Actions:

- Review facilities repair, maintenance and improvement needs.
- Consider expanding hours of availability of shelters.
- Consider a pilot “safe parking” program at one shelter.
- Develop a priority list and budget for these actions.

C. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EFFORTS

Objective 7: Provide information about sound relocation and financial planning, including Hawai‘i’s high cost of living, to individuals and families outside of Hawai‘i who inquire about the availability of services.

Actions:

- Establish common language among shelters and service providers in response to inquiries.
- Provide information concerning camping rules, the high cost of housing, and work requirements in shelters.
- Begin to standardize shelter admission and outreach service policies throughout the State, working with the various continuum of care providers.
- Begin discussion among community based providers towards the establishment of common standards for service provision.

D. INCREASE LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

Objective 8: Establish the State Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Actions:

- The council will be created by executive order of the Governor.
- Council membership includes, but is not limited to, the heads of key state agencies, local federal officials, local continuum of care representatives, community leaders, representatives of faith-based communities, homeless or formerly homeless persons, and representatives of the philanthropic and business community.

E. IMPROVE DELIVERY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES TOWARD ELIMINATING HOMELESSNESS

Objective 9: Educate the general public about the most effective means to eliminate homelessness.

Actions:

- Encourage charitable organizations to consider programs based on best available research and practices, and discourage programs, including certain food distribution programs that support the choice to live in parks or on sidewalks when shelter is available.
- Provide a catalogue of effective programs and volunteer opportunities available through shelters, outreach service providers, faith-based communities and other community groups.